1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

taking his small son or daughter for a walk through the village, pointing out various things seen on the way, and giving their names. Adults do not, I think, purposely talk to children in the 'baby fashion' affected by many people among ourselves when addressing small children. But like ourselves, they are proud to repeat to one another what their babies can say, and they used to enjoy explaining to me what was meant by a childish attempt at some hard word.

I give a few examples of childish efforts at pronouncing some of the common words of the language: *ia* = *ien* (fish); *uvi* = *uir* (coco-nut); *dada* = *gag* (short for *ruin a gag*, water to drink); *ulu* = *tamu* (taro); *u* = *gu* (pig); *kulil* = *kurir* (beads); *kuli* = *kuka* (crab); *pota* = *potan* (sun); *iwa* = *dʒiwau* (moon); *tua* = *tsura* (fire); *dodo* = *isu* (sit down); *titi* = *tʃitʃi* (milk, or breast, said when hungry); *bāki* = *pāki* (carry pick-a-back). These were used by children of my acquaintance who would be perhaps between two and three years old. The speech of a child of four or rather over was quite intelligible to me.

Learning to walk.

Great interest is taken in the child's first attempts to stand upright, and it is helped in its efforts at walking by being held up with a sling made of the fibrous tissue that grows round the stem of the banana palm. The following 'medicine' is used to make a child learn to walk quickly:

When it first begins to crawl, take the roots of the tree *Toankinon* (belongs to *Rutaceae*), scrape off some of the small rootlets, chew them with the betel-mixture, spit on to your hand and pull on the child's legs, then rub the saliva over them.

At the point when our children are crawling, these babies seem to go through a stage of 'running on all fours', with the knees slightly bent and the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet flat on the ground (see Pl. 12). They crawl as well, but as soon as their interest is aroused in something at a little distance from them, they adopt the other method which is quicker. Nomoin, the baby in the photograph (Pl. 12*b*), was my next-door neighbour and a great friend. He would be crawling about in the ordinary way, but as soon as he saw me would make for me on all fours as hard as he could. At this stage he had cut his central incisors in both jaws, and also one lower lateral, and there were signs of the eruption of the

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

145 left upper lateral, so presumably his age would be rather more than
• 481 a year, assuming that teeth are cut approximately as in our own children. Since my return I have noticed some English children running on all fours in the same way, but I am sure it is less general
516 here than it seems to be among the Solomon Islanders. If a child sees anything on the ground that interests him, he will pick it up and sit back on his haunches, still keeping his soles flat on the
857 ground. A favourite amusement with one group of children was to set two babies of about this age a little distance away from them, and then attract their attention, so that they made for the other children, who watched to see which of them got there first. This was done so often that it appeared almost like an organized game, the babies enjoying it as much as the older children (Pl. 14*a*).

Methods of carrying babies.

854 There are no cradles, but sometimes a baby will be put to lie on a woman's hood spread on the ground. Most of its time, however, is spent in being either carried or nursed.

A very small infant is carried in the arms. Sometimes it will be supported also by having its legs put through a sling made of the broad fibre that grows round the stem of the banana palm, thus leaving one of the mother's hands free (Pl. 13*a*). At an early age it is set astride the hips, with the mother's hands clasped round it (Pl. 13*b*). A baby soon learns to stretch out its legs ready to be put in that position when it is lifted from the ground. If it is to be carried far, as on a journey, the child is frequently supported on the hip by a sling of banana fibre, or, nowadays, sometimes by means of an old loin-cloth, the other end of the sling being hung round its mother's neck. Men will also carry infants in this fashion. The native word for this method of carrying a child is *gi*. The
[857] ordinary pick-a-back (*pāki*) is also used by both sexes, and this, more often than the hip position, is in favour with little girls, who often carry around a baby not much smaller than themselves. They clearly take a pride in so doing, and often used to bring their charges to let me see what a big baby they could carry. Often the child can run about quite well by itself and rather resents the indignity. To carry a child supported on the palm of the hand, in a standing position, is *di*, to perch the child on one's shoulder is *matok*. When the child is old enough to hang on securely, it is put to sit on the top of the load of wood or taro its mother is carry-

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 12

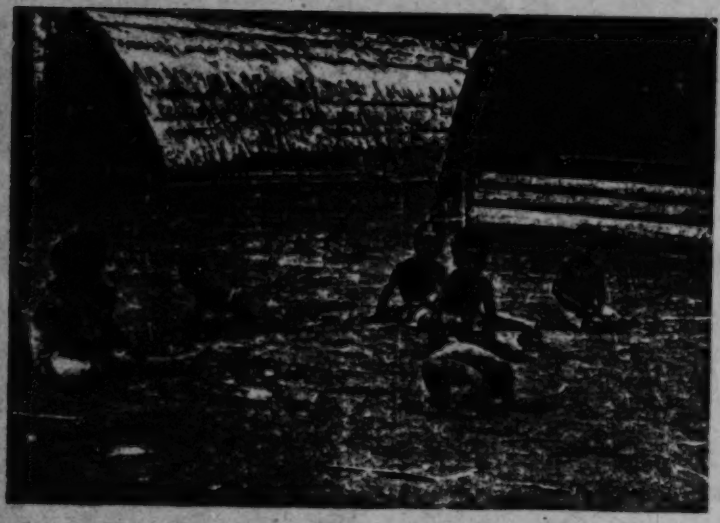
145
481

CHILDREN RUNNING ON ALL FOURS

[facing p. 170]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

PLATE 14



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a. CHILDREN PLAYING: KURTATCHI

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b. DIVING: AT PETATS

[Facing p. 174]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

to be exacted of the small boys until they are old enough to go fishing seriously. 857

Most of the active games seem to be played in rather desultory fashion, nothing in the form of sports or contests being organized. A good deal of running after one another goes on, of course, but I never saw children racing, or playing anything which could be compared to our 'Tag'. A form of 'Hide-and-seek' is played mostly by adults. The children like to tear about the village waving flaming-sticks or torches made of coco-nut palm leaves, and though the risk of fire must be considerable, nobody ever says: 'Don't.' 857 526

The children of Petats, where there is a good sandy beach, and, usually, a smooth sea, at least on the 'lagoon' side of the island, were always in and out of the water. Even the four- or five-year-olds were good at diving, going in either head or feet first, or in a kind of squatting posture, clasping their knees, but from no great height (Pl. 14*b*). They get a very good elastic swing to a standing dive. They swim under water for some distance, with a movement of the hands close to the body, palms facing backwards, and do not seem to mind the sharks, which I have sometimes seen quite close to them. It may be that these sharks are harmless, but man-eating sharks are sometimes heard of, and accidents are known to occur. The children's light-coloured palms and soles show up very strikingly beside their dark bodies through the transparent water. The village of Kurtatchi, standing as it does on the top of a steep cliff with a rocky beach and the breakers of the open sea below, offers little inducement to indulgence in water games. The small children there did not go into the sea, except for walking through pools in the reef at low tide. The older boys and men occasionally bathed in the surf, some used surf-boards to ride the rollers, the boys wearing the *upi* looking very odd as their head-gear bobbed up and down. The native word for surf-riding is *tʃitʃir*, and descriptions of it occur in some of their stories of times past, including one involving the famous 'two brothers'. 481 857 526 [36] [538]

Both boys and girls are excellent tree-climbers, but this is done chiefly to get coco-nuts, areca-nuts, or opossum, not merely as a sport. They climb with the aid of a band of fibre round both feet. There is, however, a game in which the boys set up a dead tree in the earth, or, more often, in the sand of the beach, swarm up its trunk, and try to balance themselves on the highest branch that will bear them, egging each other on to go up higher on to a smaller 481 857 526

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

526 857 481 branch. I have also seen them play with a tree inverted, so that its spreading roots were uppermost; the game was to climb to the top of the root and stand upright, quite a feat of balancing, since the trunk was far from steady (Pl. 15).

857 524 As usual, there are many games based on imitation of their elders. A favourite amusement among the small boys is to truss up one of their number and carry him about on a pole, as their fathers carry pigs. Usually they do not get very far before the struggles of the victim throw the whole lot of them over, amid shrieks of laughter, and sometimes howls.

Sometimes rough attempts are made to construct tiny huts for the purpose of playing at house, but those I saw were very unskilfully put together, and speedily fell to pieces. But once, up in the mountains, I saw what was clearly a children's playhouse, constructed by adults, a small edition of the usual native hut, complete with little plank-beds, beside which lay pipes and materials for chewing the betel-mixture! I was told that sometimes a group of little girls will go off by themselves and build leaf huts in the bush or on the shore, and live there for several days, catching crabs and small fish on the reef, and lizards or other small creatures in the bush, bringing some of these back to the village to exchange for taro, which they take away with them to cook for themselves. This was not done while I was there, but I have sometimes seen a couple of little girls take a bit of broken pot and boil small pieces of taro in it, carefully wrapped up in leaves in imitation of the procedure adopted by their mothers. Great was the joy of one little lady to whom I gave an empty soup tin for the purpose. Both boys and girls like to catch small crabs and roast them over a fire, or hold [262] them in the flame of coco-nut palm leaf torches. Grasshoppers are also caught and roasted in the same manner.

Acting.

Many children are excellent mimics, an accomplishment which is much appreciated by their audience, both children and adults. After the annual visit of inspection of the Governor, the Petats children enacted the whole occasion in most amusing fashion. A row of small ones was drawn up, to represent the parade of villagers which is always a feature of the day. One carried a bit of rag on a pole for a flag. The older child impersonating the Governor had a large umbrella very cleverly made out of leaves spiked through

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

Unfortunately, I omitted to bring home a specimen for identification. It consists of tiny green globules, and looks not unlike a bunch of grapes in the earliest stages of formation. Guppy (1887, p. 89) mentions an alga, a species of *Caulerpa*, as being eaten with relish by the natives of Treasury Island, which from his description may be the same or perhaps an allied species.

There are some varieties of edible fungi; they are not cultivated or made objects of special search, but if seen in the course of a journey through the bush, will be gathered and taken home. I cannot find in my notes any reference to the method employed in cooking them. Most of the fungi growing in the bush are avoided and are thought to be poisonous.

By far the most important of all the nuts available, and in the front rank of their foodstuffs, is the coco-nut. The meat, especially that of the nuts in the green stage, when it is soft and creamy, is a permanent stand-by as an article of diet, and at a later stage it is used in making ceremonial pudding. The cool sweetish liquid inside a green nut provides a most refreshing drink, which, fortunately, can be obtained all the year round. The nuts are procured by climbing the trunk and knocking them down. Climbing is assisted by tying a bit of fibre round the feet, which then grasp the trunk, the body is supported by the grip thus obtainable, while both hands reach up as far as possible, grasp the trunk above the head, and pull the body up towards them, till the knees are bent so as nearly to touch them, the feet then taking another hold. Men and women, boys and girls, are all very skilful at doing this, but the older men send the small boys up if there are any about. The nuts are opened in this way: the outer sheath is removed by impaling it on a stick sharpened to a point and stuck in the ground at a suitable angle. Having removed this outer covering, the opener takes a trade knife, and with two or three sharp taps, cuts off a piece of the top of the shell as we slice the top off a boiled egg. The liquid is then drunk straight from the nut. If there is no knife handy, two of the 'eyes' will be pierced with a stick or sharp stone, but drinking is then a much slower process, and the other is preferred.

Canarium almonds are esteemed a great delicacy, and the time when they are ripe is eagerly anticipated. This is one of the few products that are not available all the year round. During the time of my residence, the first nuts were brought in on May 14, and the